reprehensible as to imitate masonry in cast plaster. Any style which requires mullions or tracery must necessarily be unsuitable to brick construction. Let a mullion appear what it is,—a bar: construct it of stone, wood, or metal, if you will, but not of a number of little pieces of baked clay, piled one on the top of the other. The high-pitched roof, "excluding sun and air," which Professor Cockerell has lashed so vigorously, and which is such a source of expense to modern Gothic architects, would not be necessary to give due expression to this style,—and a glance at the interior of St. Mark's, at Venice, would serve to show that in a style which admits of such a picturesque display of large and subordinate arches, even galleries would not be altogether hopeless.

Whatever may be the faults of the Romanesque—and they are legion—they were faults produced rather from a want of refinement of execution than from any inherent defect in the style itself. It breathes throughout the purest spirit of Christianity, somewhat gloomy and ascetic perhaps, but still untainted by the subsequent pollution. It has been well remarked by Lord Lindsay, that these artists "Christianized everything they touched;" and when we reflect that their sole *precedent* was the very dregs of the splendid luxury and licentiousness of the Roman empire, it must be admitted that they displayed an amount of taste and originality quite marvellous. It was these barbarians, be it noted, who were the first to spring the arch *from* the column, instead of buttressing the arch *with* the column,—who first laid aside the clumsy bent architrave of the Romans to adopt that beautiful system of orders of mouldings afterwards carried to such perfection by the Gothic architects,—who first conceived the magnificent idea, and carried into effect the magnificent reality, of an aerial cupola. But take the least artistic part of the Romanesque—its truly barbarous sculpture—and compare it with the Gothic sculpture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and this will show the minds of the artists in their true light. Both were grotesque in the extreme; the one the production of an impotent hand, the other of a vindictive mind; the one did his best to produce that holy imagery and peculiar symbolism which had its origin in the catacombs of Rome, the other to pourtray his rival monks in ludicrous positions and unseemly attitudes; the one carved his devout freemasonry rudely enough, the other cut elegant devices into riddles and rebuses of the names of ecclesiastics. I must own I prefer the crudeness of the former to the refinements of the latter.

I sincerely hope, in conclusion, that a style which our continental neighbours are studying with great avidity may meet with some little more attention in England.

PHILO-ROMANESQUE.

NORTHAMPTON CORN EXCHANGE.

SIR,—May I beg, through the medium of your columns, and as an architect and competitor for designs for this building, to say a few words respecting this competition; and in so doing, I beg to say that I should not have troubled you, nor have occupied your valuable space, but from a sense of the gross injustice done to those architects who, I may say, were so unfortunate as to join in this competition,—a competition, I believe, that has seldom been surpassed for the taste which most of these designs exhibited; and from a careful estimation of them I should say they could not have been valued at less than 2,000*l.*

The cost of the building, as stated in the instructions to architects, was not to exceed 7,300*l.*; but after some time had elapsed, and we (that is myself and partner) had begun preparing our designs, a circular was sent to the effect that the directors had come to a resolution that plans would be entertained although the cost of the building might in their estimate exceed that sum, and that the intention of the directors was to select such plan as would best carry out their requirements at the least expense.

Trusting, of course, to what was here stated, we sent in a design accordingly; and in about three weeks afterwards, having to transact some business in that town, I proceeded there, and was allowed the liberty of inspecting the designs, of which there were upwards of fifty, and a better collection, as I have said before, I have never seen.

Upon making inquiries, I found that the committee had selected three designs, which they were to submit to the directors, who were to make a selection of one of them. I also found, to my astonishment, that they had resolved not to consider any design estimated above the sum of 8,000*l.*, and also all those with pillars in the large hall,—and which virtually threw out of the competition three-fourths of the designs sent in.

Now, what can be thought of such a competition:—the directors of a public company inviting architects to compete, sending them instructions which they did not abide by, and only led us astray in our designs? I am inclined to think that it was merely for their own fancy; for what should they know about pillars, when out of about a dozen designs they chose three, and, after referring them to three eminent architects, refused to have any of them. But to return; it can be proved that a room with pillars would have suited their purpose as well, if not better, than without: and I will leave it to any other architects who have seen these designs to attest the truth, and to hear me out in saying that the majority of the designs sent in with pillars were infinitely better than those without. I do not say that they have not a right to throw out such designs as they might think proper, provided they were not according to their instructions,—but that is not the case. Is it at all likely, I would ask, that we, or any of those architects who were thus thrown out of the competition without having their designs even looked at, would have been at the trouble and expense which is necessarily incurred in designs for such a building, if we had thought the instructions were not binding? If we had *not* complied it would have been a different thing: but here it is just the opposite; we trusted to their instructions, and why did they not abide by them? There were no restrictions before the plans were made, then why should they have made any after they had been sent in? All this would have been avoided if they had employed a professional man at the first, instead of three at the end, as they have done, and which would no doubt have led to far different results, as it appears, from a resolution they have come to, that from the reports of the architects they employed to report on the three designs they had selected, who considered that neither of them were at all suitable or even capable of construction without an enormous outlay much beyond their means, they therefore resolved that none of them should be accepted; but that two of the architects whose plans had been thus condemned should design another between them, so that they are about as near getting a plan to their mind as they were at first.

A. AND C.

*** Since writing the above I have received a letter in answer to an inquiry I had made, stating that Mr. S. Alexander, and Mr. Hull of Northampton, are the architects chosen.

THE BIRMINGHAM WORKHOUSE COMPETITION.

THE guardians have resolved on adopting the plan, No. 24, selected by the architects, whom they had called in to advise them, as the best. It would seem, however, that the matter is even now not straightforward. Our readers will remember that the selecting architects recommended also a second plan, said by them to be obviously by the same architect as the first. Now this plan, it appears, bears the name of the architects Messrs. Drury and Bateman, partially erased; and as the instructions peremptorily required that the designs should be anonymous, a guardian, Mr. Brookes, moved that these two designs should be rejected, inasmuch as they were not prepared in accordance with the instructions. The motion was rejected, on the ground that the onus of the selection rested on the three architects who had been appointed to examine the plans, and that these gentlemen could not have been *influenced* in their decision by the names being on the plan. This is not the question. If the architects have recommended plans for selection not prepared strictly in accordance with the instructions, they have not done their duty.

"A WORD TO THE WISE."

DWELLING-HOUSES.

THE fears of us poor Londoners have been much worked upon lately with the fearful results of a visit from the cholera. At the very mention of that fearful scourge whole parishes are found ready to unite in petitioning for an Act to render increased ventilation and perfect drainage an imperative provision in all houses hereafter built; but more than this is required,—they imagine that this want is not with them, or with their class, but that the real necessity exists in but small tenements situate in the narrow confined courts and neat alleys forming the back slums of London, and homes of our *mobility*. It is not, however, only these houses that are deficient in the mere requisites that are necessary to ensure health for the occupants, but it is houses of the respectable rentals of 40*l.* or more. To tenants of such houses we would urge the imperative duty of seeing that in the house there is nothing injurious to the health of their family. But a short time since a fatal case was reported of the death of a widow lady of cholera, in Gibson-square, Islington, and this was followed within the week by another death in the same house, and the fatal result was attributed to "*sleeping over a closet that smelt of the drains.*" Is it to be told to a reasonable man, that to ensure perfect ventilation and good drainage, an extra expense must be first incurred to effect the same, and if, knowing this, a man grinds a builder down in the purchase money to such a low figure as will pay none but those who know how to scamp and hurry through work to suit the market price,—is it likely that the builder would incur expense when it is doubtful whether he would in return get one farthing more from the enlightened and liberal purchaser? This cheap purchase of house property will tell, and has with many already told, a fearful tale, verifying most impressively the old adage—"Penny wise but pound foolish." That man who purchases a newly-erected house cheaper than he can have it built, is either taken in and done for, or strictly speaking he is encouraging a rogue; for if the builder does not receive a fair price, how is it possible for him to act with honesty and justness by his fellow tradesmen engaged under him? If the builder receive but 15*s.* for every 20*s.* he expends, it is manifest that to keep up such a losing game *some must suffer*. Every one must have a home: a home is the first and last essential to human life; it is the place in which all our associations are to be found; it is there we enjoy the pleasures and endure the sorrows of life. To secure that essential and necessity we are compelled to make every other thought subservient. These thoughts should occupy every man's attention—should arouse in him a continual anxiety and thirst to know in what manner the "home" may be increased in comfort; not a modern invention connected with health should be passed without examination; many, perhaps, will be found to be whimsical and useless, but all will be found to be instructive and suggestive. All matters connected with building have long been considered as unworthy of general interest; scarcely a man but who in his own mind considers himself a judge of "bricks and mortar," chuckling to himself that he can see as far as any one through a brick wall, but if the question was more deeply considered, a great change would speedily be effected: they would find, when they gained a knowledge of the principles that govern *all* connected with building, what a very little they really understand of the science. Thousands of houses are built and sold in the manner the public would purchase an article of clothing, but unfortunately, the one being for permanent use while the other is but temporary, the result, when unfortunate, is continually felt by the unlucky owner, and unless a great portion of the community will arouse to view the right side of this question, there seems but little doubt that every square yard near London will be covered with houses ill-arranged, badly ventilated, filled with faults, and containing all the elements that old King Death can wish for.

FRANCIS CROSS.

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